supplies of Essential Commodities Act etc. by the State/UT Governments.

steel by Rs. 230 crores. The increase in prices with effect from 20.10.96 will have

Statement

Trend in the Wholesale Price Indices (WPI) of selected essential commodities 1994—96

Commodity	Percentage Variation		
	19.11.94	18.11.95	16.11.96
	25.3.94	25.3.95	30.3.96
Rice	8.6	7.2	10.4
Wheat	−0.2	−3.7	20.6
Gram	17.8	−22.0	31.1
Arhar	0.1	40.0	2.6
Onions	47.9	152.7	13.4
Tea	23.5	67.7	11.0
Sugar	−4.4	3.8	1.6
Groundnut Oil	11.1	1.4	1.9
Mustard Oil	16.7	5.0	−0.9
Vanaspati	9.3	−4.8	1.3
Salt	3.6	93.1	6.0

Impact of coal price increasse on SAIL

1802. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the likely impact of the two latest increases in the prices of coal by the Coal India Limited, on the cost of production in SAIL plants and consequently on the prices of steel;

(b) in what manner such cost increases are sought to be neutralised, partially or fully;

(c) in what manner the relative disadvantage of SAIL plants vis-a-vis TISCO and VSP, arising out of such price increases of domestic coal, is sought to be overcome; and

(d) the future strategy of SAIL to meet its coking coal requirements of appropriate quality?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL & MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) For SAIL, the increase in indigenous coking coal price with effect from 1.4.96 will increase the cost of production of have an adverse impact of Rs. 180 crores on cost of production on annualised basis.

(b) and (c) In an effort to compensate input cost increases on account of coal price increase and other input cost escalations, SAIL has taken various measures viz. higher production/better product-mix, improved techno-economics i.e. reduction in coke rate, energy consumption, BF productivity and strict control and monitoring of operating cost, etc.

(d) In addition to development of captive mines, efforts are made to off-set the high ash of indigenous coking coal by using low ash superior quality imported coking coal. The coal companies are regularly apprised about the poor quality of indigenous coal. There is also constent interaction between SAIL & CIL on issues related to quality.

Loses by SAIL due to dubious deals

1803. SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state: